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11 January 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : Director of Current Intelligence  
Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM : Chief, CIA Operations Center

SUBJECT : Observations and Recommendations  
Concerning the CIA Operations Center

REFERENCE : Report of the Working Group on  
Operations Centers' Information Flows,  
etc., 13 April 1973

1. After serving for 120 days as the Chief of an expanded CIA Operations Center, I think it is appropriate to report on progress, to record a few observations, identify several problems and proffer several recommendations.

2. On the matter of progress we have met our charge to "improve the process of alerting, cable selection and assignment of action," and the Center is well on the way toward carrying out most--though not all--of the twelve "120-day" recommendations outlined in Paragraph 18 of the Working Group's report. Five of these recommendations have been substantially achieved; four more are in process; one awaits a Computerized Dissemination System that will not be in operation for at least a year and a half. The remaining two recommendations--one concerning the proper place of a expanded Agency Center in our organizational structure and the other on the solicitation of USIB approval for a National Center--require special comment and are the focus of the balance of this paper. On the question of my longer range plans to carry out the full spirit of the report or certain of your other plans, i.e., transfer of the OWI/SSOC Centers, accommodate the NIC, etc., I think that should be held for a later report. I would only record here that these plans are entirely predicated on the assumption that we can continue to rely on receiving all of the former Vietnamese Affairs Staff space, now partially occupied by portions of the NIO group.

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3. On the present image of the Center in the Agency I get the impression that most people feel little has changed in spite of the expansion and attention we received in the spring and summer. I also have the impression that a significant number of people are unaware of what we are doing and may deduce that some of management's earlier enthusiasm for a fully representative Agency Center has waned under the press of more urgent matters. Educating people as to what the expanded Center is about is my problem on which I am making some progress via briefings and getting us included in several Agency courses. But the tendency to continue to regard the Center as a proprietary of OCI to the detriment of its CIA image and how this in turn affects us is real and one I cannot deal with singlehandedly.

4. It seems to me that while this association was essential in the past it need not have been continued when the Center was given a CIA wide mantle. This association, however, was consciously perpetuated in the first recommendation of Paragraph 18 of the referenced report--that the DDI remain Executive agent for the Center, etc.,--which in my view does not accord with the spirit of the rest of the report, nor in fact with our long term goal, the twelfth recommendation of the same Paragraph 18--that the Agency obtain inter-Agency agreement on NIOC. As I see it the goal of an Intelligence Community Operations Center (NIOC) under the DCI is viable only if our own Center achieves full and recognized Agency status early on so that the prospect of affiliation becomes attractive to other members of the Intelligence Community. It is my view that unless the Center is an integral part of the Office of the Director, thus transcending any sub-Directorate control or flavor, we cannot claim to be a CIA Center, let alone advertise ourselves as a pre-Community model. Regardless of what the sign over the door says or of what management intends, we will continue to be viewed as either the "OCI Watch Office" or an appendage of the DDI unless changes are made. This perception of the Center's niche in the hierarchy of the Agency is one of the most serious impediments I encounter, especially when dealing with the other Directorates.

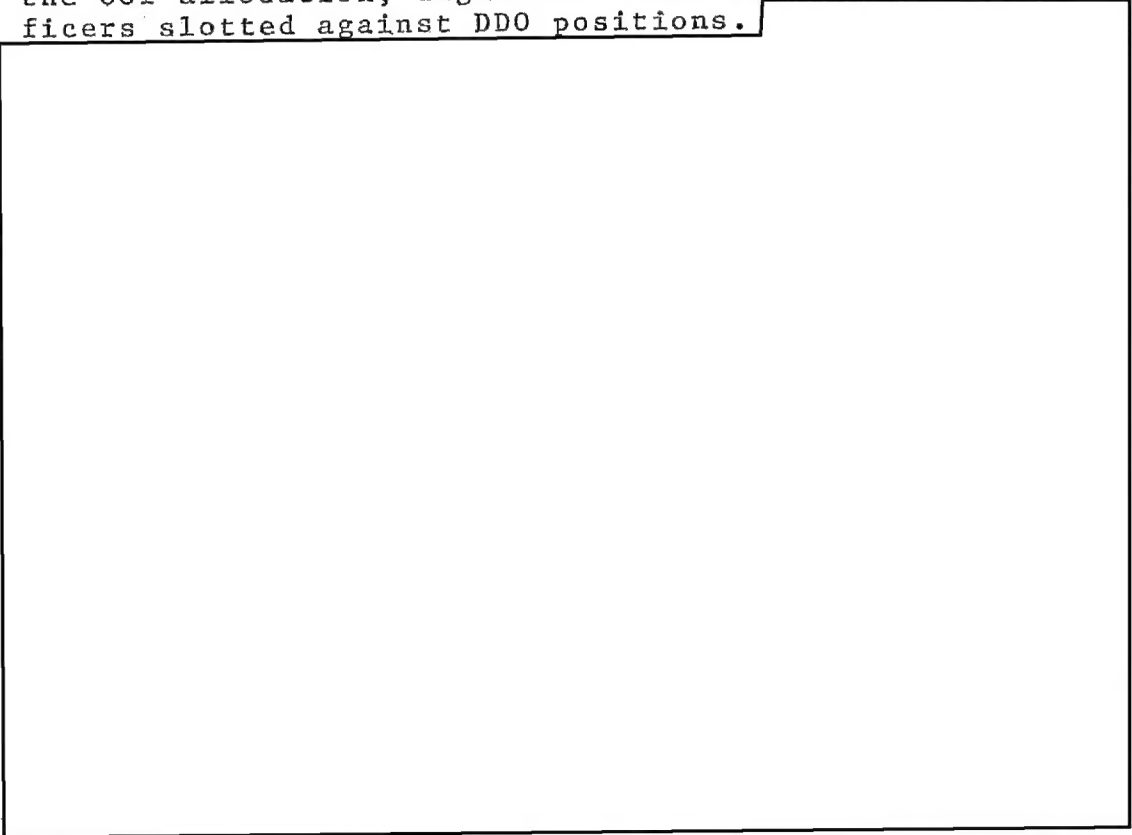
5. Aside from the internal problems flowing from the present status of the Center as a de facto dependent of OCI, there is the related matter of our external image, and thus our perceived influence. Our image shapes the manner in which other Agencies react to us now--aside from any future NIOC. The contrasts between us and the White House Situation Room, the National Military Command Center of the JCS in the Pentagon, the NSOC of NSA, and the State Operations Center are significant--and damaging to the Agency. Without exception, their resources--people, space, technology--exceed ours, sometimes embarrassingly so. Their orientation is upward, and while specifics may differ, they are part of the top complex of their organizations and have regular contact with their leaderships. In limited areas they can speak for those leaderships, and can confidently project themselves both internally and externally. In the State Department, the Operations Center is part of the larger Executive Secretariat that serves to manage all paper and related activity coming to and from the Secretary of State. When the Secretary requires data or support of any kind, he need turn only to the Executive Secretary.

6. Then there is the very important matter of my flexibility as a manager in trying to play a game of "catch up." As I view my charter, mainly from the reference report but also from my numerous discussions with the D/OCI and my few chats with you, I am to make the Operations Center truly CIA and bring it into the modern world more like its sister Centers. This naturally presupposes a better than ever chance of getting preferential consideration on resource allocations. In the Center's present incarnation as an integral part of OCI--thus necessitating both OCI and DDI approval for every important managerial action or initiative--and without any resources to call its own and little organizational influence, I cannot see how the urgent spirit of reference report can be followed and significant results be expected in a reasonable time frame.

7. I have concluded therefore that to achieve a truly representative CIA Operations Center and one which legitimately can have community aspirations--one within the spirit of the Study Group's proposals--certain fundamental changes in organization and orientation are necessary.

The changes I suggest are:

A. Provide the Center with its own organizational identity by approving the attached staffing pattern. Currently there is no staffing pattern for the Center. In the past, its staff has come out of the OCI allocation, augmented since 1965 by DDO officers slotted against DDO positions.



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B. Move the organizational subordination of the Center from the OCI/DDI to the Office of the Director and revise appropriate regulations, etc., accordingly. (In this context, serious thought should be given to possible combinations along the lines of the State Department model.)

C. Provide for some regular contact between the Chief of the Center and the leadership of the Agency.

[Redacted Signature]

VINCENT J. HEYMAN  
Chief, CIA Operations Center

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CONCUR:

[Redacted Signature]

Director of Current Intelligence  
With reservations noted in my  
attached memorandum.

4 FEB 1974

Date

See attached memo, dated 11 February 1974  
Deputy Director for Intelligence

Date

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4 February 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Secretary, Management Committee  
THROUGH : Deputy Director for Intelligence  
SUBJECT : Comments on Chief Operations Center  
Memorandum of 11 January 1974

1. In concurring with Mr. Heyman's report I noted that I did so with reservations. These reservations are primarily with means and procedures, not with the general thrust of what he is trying to do. When the Management Committee approved the Working Group's recommendations on the Operations Center last spring it set in motion an open-ended process. Not only does a position for the Operations Center independent of, but supportive to, the four Directorates seem logical but, as Mr. Heyman points out, it is the pattern which has evolved in State and Defense. On the other hand we must face the fact that this runs counter to the traditional or "baronial" way in which the Agency has been run, and it will take quite a wrench in our thinking to bring about. There are also some knotty problems in personnel and budgetary management.

2. This said, I have one primary concern. This is that the Operations Center's close integration with OCI is not simply historical accident. It reflects the fact that, even if reorganized, the Operations Center has more to do with OCI's business than it does with any other Agency component: Messrs. McCone, Raborn, Helms, Schlesinger and Colby have thus held their respective D/OCI's responsible for the support it gave them. In fact, smooth intermeshing of the two organizations twenty-four hours a day is the single most critical requirement for the operations of both.

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Anything approaching organizational divorce is unthinkable. (Mr. Heyman agrees.) The problem then is to reconcile two incompatibles--the requirement that the Operations Center be a central organ of the Agency and the requirement that it be closely integrated with a component two echelons down. In the management textbooks this would appear an absurdity, but in the real world of a peculiar institution such as this, compromises can be found.

3. An acceptable package might include the following elements:

--That the formal subordination of the Operations Center to the DDI be ended and that the Center be resubordinated to the Office of the DCI.

--That the Director recognize the close relationship between the Operations Center and OCI by designating the D/OCI as his normal channel for guidance of the Center, without limiting direct access of the Chief, Operations Center to the DCI.

--That the Chief, Operations Center's fitness report be drafted by the D/OCI and reviewed by the Secretary of the Management Committee, in consultation with the other Deputy Directors.

--That the Operations Center budget and table of organization be separated from those of OCI, and that the Chief, Operations Center have the same control of the resources allocated to him as do other Operating Officials of the Agency. (But see paragraph four below.)

--That the D/OCI be asked to comment on the Center's annual objectives and resource allocations before they are accepted.


--That, to symbolize the Center's independent status, Chief, Operations Center be invited to attend the DCI's morning staff meeting every Friday, when the next week's schedule is discussed.

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4. The most complicated issues raised by these proposals are in the field of personnel management. The Agency's career service system is in a state of flux, and it is difficult to say how a small, independent separate component can be fitted into the new guidelines. The concept of the Operations Center as an organization containing a number of positions designated to be staffed by particular directorates makes sense. (I would in general support establishment of the T/O Mr. Heyman proposes, although I might differ in some detail.) The difficulty comes with the small central core of "Operations Center professionals." STAT

5. All parents must eventually see their children go forth into the world and in this case the going-forth is overdue. For a number of reasons we have kept the Center on a short apron string, and we are now several steps behind the other agencies in town. It is time to move. STAT

  
RICHARD LEHMAN  
Director of Current Intelligence

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